

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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R 051734Z AUG 77
FM USMISSION NATO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5277
SECDEF WASHDC
INFO ALL NATO CAPITALS
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USDEL MBFR VIENNA
USNMR SHAPE BE
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 NATO 07585
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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PARM, NATO
SUBJECT: MBFR AND THE ALLIANCE
SUMMARY: MBFR NEGOTIATIONS HAVE BEEN UNDERWAY FOR
FOUR YEARS--PERHAPS LONGER THAN PARTICIPANTS ANTICIPATED
WHEN THE TALKS BEGAN IN 1973. IN THE BROADER CONTEXT OF
EAST-WEST RELATIONS, IN MILITARY TECHNOLOGY, AND IN
FORCE POSTURES, FOUR YEARS HAVE BROUGHT CHANGES THAT
MUST AFFECT ASSESSMENTS OF MBFR IN BOTH EAST AND WEST.
ALLIED ATTITUDES TOWARD THE NEGOTIATIONS HAVE CERTAINLY
EVOLVED, BECOMING, WE BELIEVE, MORE MATURE--BOTH MORE
REALISTIC AND LESS SKEPTICAL. IT IS THIS ASPECT OF
THE MBFR PROCESS THAT WE SURVEY BELOW. WE CONCLUDE
THAT ALLIED ATTITUDES TOWARD THIS SIGNIFICANT AND
NOW FAMILIAR FEATURE OF THE DETENTE PROCESS HAVE NEVER
BEEN MORE POSITIVE. MOST ALLIES WOULD AGREE, WE BELIEVE,
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THAT WHATEVER THE FINAL OUTCOME OF THE NEGOTIATIONS, THE
CONSULTATIVE PROCESS ON MBFR HAS ACHIEVED THE OBJECTIVE
THE US SET IN PRESENTING ITS APPROACH TO THE COUNCIL IN
1973--THAT "THE PROCESS OF AGREEING ON AN ACCEPTABLE
OUTCOME AND DEVELOPING A NEGOTIATING POSITION FOR MBFR
SHOULD BE SO HANDLED, AS TO STRENGTHEN THE ALLIANCE."
END SUMMARY.

1. MBFR IS SOMETHING NEW IN THE HISTORY OF THE ALLIANCE. SINCE THE NEGOTIATION BEGAN, THE ALLIES HAVE BECOME INCREASINGLY CONSCIOUS OF THE UNIQUENESS OF THIS ENDEAVOR. CONSULTATIONS WITHIN THE ALLIANCE ON MBFR AIM FOR FAR MORE THAN A HARMONIZATION OF POLICIES. EACH COUNCIL DECISION ON AN ALLIANCE MBFR POSITION REPRESENTS NOTHING LESS THAN AGREEMENT ON A COMMON ALLIED EXTERNAL POLICY VIS-A-VIS THE EAST. WHEN AN AD HOC GROUP REP EXPLAINS AN ALLIED POSITION TO THE EAST, BASED ON TALKING POINTS AGREED WITHIN THE AD HOC GROUP, HE IS AFFIRMING AN ALLIED IDENTITY. THE ALLIES ARE SENSITIVE TO THIS ASPECT OF MBFR, AND VALUE HIGHLY CONTINUED PRESERVATION OF ALLIED COHESION ON THIS SUBJECT.

2. WHY THE ALLIES SUPPORT MBFR:

(A) MOST IMPORTANT, AT THE OUTSET, WAS A DESIRE TO CONTAIN DOMESTIC PRESSURES FOR UNILATERAL US AND OTHER ALLIED MANPOWER REDUCTIONS IN CENTRAL EUROPE, PENDING AGREEMENT ON NEGOTIATED REDUCTIONS. A TANGIBLE ACHIEVEMENT OF MBFR THUS FAR IS THAT IT HAS HELPED SOME ALLIES THROUGH A DIFFICULT PERIOD OF PRESSURE FOR UNILATERAL MANPOWER CUTS. NOW, THE RIGIDITY OF THE EAST'S POSITION IN MBFR HAS NOT BEEN LOST ON INFORMED WESTERN OPINION. ALLIED PUBLICS HAVE BECOME MORE AWARE OF THE SOVIET MILITARY BUILDUP AND OF THE COMPLEXITIES OF EAST-
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WEST RELATIONS. THUS, DOMESTIC PRESSURES FOR PERSONNEL REDUCTIONS IN CENTRAL EUROPE BY THE NETHERLANDS, BELGIUM, AND THE UK, ALTHOUGH STILL POTENT, ARE MORE MANAGEABLE NOW THAN THEY HAVE BEEN IN SOME TIME.

(B) THE ALLIES RECOGNIZE THAT AN MBFR AGREEMENT WOULD PLACE PERSONNEL LEVELS IN CENTRAL EUROPE ON A MORE SOLID, ALMOST CONTRACTUAL BASIS. THIS IS A FACTOR IN FRG SUPPORT OF MBFR, SINCE, EVEN THOUGH NOT SUBJECT TO DOMESTIC PRESSURES TO REDUCE ITS OWN FORCES, THE FRG ATTACHES IMPORTANCE TO ADEQUATE AND STABLE LEVELS OF FORCES STATIONED BY OTHER EUROPEAN ALLIES IN THE FRG. CONVERSELY, WE DETECT LITTLE CONCERN ABOUT CONTRACTUALIZING THROUGH MBFR THE SOVIET MILITARY PRESENCE IN CENTRAL EUROPE.

(C) AN MBFR AGREEMENT WOULD REPRESENT, NOT A WEAKENING OF US SUPPORT FOR EUROPE, BUT RATHER A NEW AND CONTRACTUAL US LINK WITH EUROPE. WHILE EUROPEAN ALLIES HAVE ONLY OCCASIONALLY AND VAGUELY REFERRED TO SUCH LINK, CANADA SEES MORE CLEARLY THE POTENTIAL IN AN MBFR AGREEMENT FOR A CLOSER TRANSATLANTIC SECURITY TIE. A CENTRAL CANADIAN INTEREST IN MBFR, ACCORDING TO CANADIANS

HERE, IS THAT AN MBFR AGREEMENT WOULD CREATE AN IMPORTANT NEW CONTRACTUAL LINK BETWEEN CANADA AND EUROPE.

(D) IMPORTANTLY, MBFR HAS BECOME A PART OF THE EAST-WEST DIALOGUE, AND ONE IN WHICH SMALLER ALLIES PARTICIPATE FULLY. AS AN ELEMENT OF THE DETENTE PROCESS, MBFR NOW OCCUPIES AN IMPORTANT PLACE IN THE EASTERN POLICIES OF CONCERNED ALLIED GOVERNMENTS, WHICH MUST DEMONSTRATE

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5278

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INFO ALL NATO CAPITALS

USMISSION GENEVA

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (EXDIS CAPTION OMITTED)

TO INFORMED PARLIAMENTARY AND PUBLIC OPINION THAT THE ALLIES ARE CONDUCTING THIS ASPECT OF THE EAST-WEST AGENDA RESPONSIBLY. THIS NEED IS SHARED NOT ONLY BY COUNTRIES SUBJECT TO DOMESTIC PRESSURES TO REDUCE THEIR FORCE LEVELS IN CENTRAL EUROPE, BUT ALSO BY THE FRG, AND BY DENMARK AND NORWAY, WHICH DO NOT HAVE PERSONNEL STATIONED IN CENTRAL EUROPE.

(E). RECOGNITION THAT ALLIED SECURITY WOULD BE ENHANCED BY AN MBFR AGREEMENT ALONG THE LINES OF THE PRESENT ALLIED POSITION. THE ALLIES CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN THE VALIDITY OF THE ORIGINAL, BASIC ALLIED NEGOTIATING

OBJECTIVES. SOVIET FORCE IMPROVEMENTS HAVE REINFORCED
ALLIED RECOGNITION THAT THEIR SECURITY WOULD BE ENHANCED
BY AN MBFR AGREEMENT BASED ON APPROXIMATE PARITY IN
GROUND FORCES IN CENTRAL EUROPE, AND ON MAXIMIZING

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SOVIET REDUCTIONS, THROUGH WITHDRAWAL OF THE COMBAT
CAPABILITY REPRESENTED BY A TANK ARMY. THE ALLIES
PARTICULARLY VALUE THE INCREASED WARNING TIME
WHICH WOULD BE IMPLICIT IN SUCH AN AGREEMENT.

3. ALLIED CAUTION: ALLIED SUPPORT FOR MBFR HAS ALWAYS
BEEN TINGED WITH CAUTION AS TO WHERE MBFR MIGHT LEAD.
THE MORE SKEPTICAL DOUBT THAT THE EAST WILL EVER AGREE
TO ANYTHING LIKE THE PRESENT ALLIED NEGOTIATING
POSITION, AND ARE CONCERNED THAT THE DYNAMIC OF THE
NEGOTIATIONS AND PRESURE FOR UNILATERAL REDUCTIONS
MIGHT BRING THE US AND OTHER ALLIES -- IN THE END --
TO ADOPT A POSITION DETRIMENTAL TO ALLIED SECURITY.
ALLIED CAUTION REGARDING MBFR SEEMED TO REACH ITS
HIGH POINT DURING NATO WORK IN 1975 ON THE ALLIED
NUCLEAR OFFER, AND ONE OF THE KEY ISSUES FOR THE
EUROPEAN ALLIES WAS TO MAKE SURE THE INCLUSION OF
CERTAIN US EQUIPMENT IN THE ALLIED OFFER WOULD NOT LEAD
TO REDUCTIONS OR LIMITATIONS ON EUROPEAN EQUIPMENT.

4. WE NOW SEE SOME DECLINE IN ALLIED CONCERN AND
INCREASE IN ALLIED CONFIDENCE REGARDING THIS NEGOTIATION--
AND THIS FOR TWO REASONS: FIRST, A MORE SOBER ATTITUDE
OF ALLIED PUBLICS TOWARD EAST-WEST RELATIONS, AND MORE
MANAGEABLE PRESSURES FOR UNILATERAL REDUCTIONS IN
THE US AND OTHER COUNTRIES, HAVE DIMINISHED ALLIED
FEAR ABOUT PRESSURES TO CONCLUDE AN UNSOUND AGREEMENT.
SECOND, THE CONTINUING EXPERIENCE OF VERY CLOSE MBFR CON-
SULTATIONS AMONG THE ALLIES HAS STRENGTHENED THEIR
CONFIDENCE IN THEIR PARTICIPATION IN THIS NEGOTIATION.

5. THE ALLIED POSITION: THE OTHER ALLIES DO NOT
CONSIDER THE PRESENT ALLIED POSITION TO BE

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IMMUTABLE, AND WILL BE PREPARED TO CONSIDER CHANGES IN
IT. HOWEVER, THE OTHER ALLIES WOULD PREFER TO HAVE THE
FINAL RESULTS OF THE DATA DISCUSSION WITH THE EAST IN
ORDER TO SEE WHAT KIND OF DISPARITY THE EAST WILL
ACKNOWLEDGE, BEFORE CONSIDERING ANY MAJOR NEW ACTION

WHICH THE ALLIES MIGHT TAKE. IN ADDITION, THE ALLIES FEEL STRONGLY THAT THE EAST MUST SHOW SOME WILLINGNESS TO MOVE IN THE NEGOTIATION, AS THE ALLIES DID WITH THE NUCLEAR OFFER, BEFORE THE ALLIES MAKE ANY MAJOR NEW OFFERS OF THEIR OWN. THEY ALSO BELIEVE THAT THE EAST WILL NOT MOVE IN MBFR UNTIL THERE IS FURTHER PROGRESS IN SALT, ALTHOUGH MOST ALLIED OFFICIALS WOULD AGREE THAT THE WEST SHOULD NOT ITSELF CREATE A RIGID LINK WITH SALT.

6. WE HAVE HAD SOME RECENT INDICATIONS OF AN INCREASING ALLIED INTEREST IN THE PHASE I OBJECTIVE OF REDUCTION OF A SOVIET TANK ARMY. DURING THE CONSULTATIONS AT NATO IN 1975 ON THE NUCLEAR OFFER, SOME OF THE EUROPEAN ALLIES SOUGHT TO DOWNPLAY THIS PHASE I OBJECTIVE IN ORDER TO EMPHASIZE THE OBJECTIVE OF APPROXIMATE PARITY BETWEEN NATO AND WP FORCES IN CENTRAL EUROPE IN THE PHASE II AGREEMENT. THE EUROPEAN ALLIES WISHED TO REQUIRE THE EAST, IN RETURN FOR THE NUCLEAR OFFER, TO AGREE IN ADVANCE TO THE NUMERICAL LEVEL OF THE PHASE II COMMON CEILING. ONE SOURCE OF WESTERN EUROPEAN INTEREST IN PHASE II WAS THAT THIS IS THE STAGE WHEN THEY WOULD TAKE THEIR OWN REDUCTIONS. SINCE THAT TIME, SHARPENED PERCEPTIONS OF SOVIET STRENGTH IN CENTRAL EUROPE, AND MORE MANAGEABLE DOMESTIC PRESSURES FOR WEST

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USMISSION GENEVA
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EXDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (EXDIS CAPTION OMITTED)

EUROPEAN TROOP REDUCTIONS, SEEM TO POINT TOWARD AN EVENTUAL SHIFT IN EMPHASIS BY THE EUROPEAN ALLIES TOWARD PHASE I SOVIET REDUCTIONS--WITHOUT DENIGRATING THE PHASE II COMMON CEILING OBJECTIVE. WE SEE NO DIMINUTION OF EUROPEAN OPPOSITION TO NATIONAL MANPOWER CEILINGS ON THE EUROPEANS, OR TO REDUCTIONS OR LIMITATIONS ON EUROPEAN EQUIPMENT, WHICH THE EUROPEAN ALLIES CONSIDER AS LEADING TO AN EASTERN DROIT DE REGARD ON NATO RESTRUCTURING AND EUROPEAN DEFENSE INTEGRATION OPTIONS.

7. THE ROLE OF FRANCE: THE COUNCIL HAS BEEN ABLE TO DEVELOP A COMMON POSITION IN MBFR ONLY BECAUSE FRANCE, ALTHOUGH OPPOSED TO THE NEGOTIATION, HAS GENERALLY REMAINED A SILENT, NON-PARTICIPANT AT COUNCIL AND SENIOR POLITICAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS ON MBFR. THE MOST SERIOUS EXCEPTION TO THIS PRACTICE WAS, OF COURSE, THE WITH-

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DRAWAL THIRTEEN MONTHS AGO OF TACIT FRENCH ACCEPTANCE THAT FRENCH FORCES IN THE FRG COULD BE INCLUDED IN THE WESTERN DATA BASE, AND THAT THE COMMON CEILING WOULD COVER THE AGGREGATE TOTAL OF WESTERN FORCES IN CENTRAL EUROPE WITHOUT PLACING ANY OBLIGATIONS ON THE FRENCH RE THEIR FORCES IN THE FRG. WE BELIEVE THAT THE FRENCH DELEGATION, WHICH HAS A GOOD UNDERSTANDING OF MBFR, WILL REMAIN VIGILANT REGARDING FEATURES OF NEW PROPOSALS WHICH MIGHT DIRECTLY AFFECT FRENCH INTERESTS. HOWEVER, WE DO NOT SEE FRANCE ADOPTING THE ROLE OF SPOILER IN THIS NEGOTIATION. IT IS NOW OVER SEVEN MONTHS SINCE THE ALLIES AND THE FRENCH AGREED TO AVOID A PRECISE DEFINITION OF THE FUTURE RELATIONSHIP OF FRENCH FORCES IN THE FRG TO THE COMMON CEILING, AND THERE IS NO INDICATION THAT THE FRENCH WILL TRY TO FORCE AN EARLY SOLUTION. THE FRENCH IN FACT SEEM CONCERNED BY THE DEGREE OF PARTICIPATION IN MBFR IMPLIED EVEN BY THEIR SILENT ATTENDANCE AT COUNCIL AND SPC MEETINGS ON THIS SUBJECT, AND THEY APPEAR DETERMINED TO BREAK THEIR SILENCE AS SELDOM AS POSSIBLE.

8. IN SUM, WE BELIEVE ALLIED ATTITUDES TOWARD MBFR HAVE EVOLVED SIGNIFICANTLY SINCE THE 1973-1975 PERIOD, WHEN SOME ALLIES AGREED VERY RELUCTANTLY TO ENTER MBFR, AND ALMOST WISHED IT WOULD GO AWAY. ALLIED ATTITUDES TOWARD THIS NEGOTIATIONS HAVE NEVER BEEN MORE POSITIVE THAN AT PRESENT. THE ALLIES SENSE THAT MBFR MAY

BE APPROACHING A NEW STAGE; THAT THE OUTCOME OF THE DATA
DISCUSSION WITH THE EAST, AND PERHAPS FURTHER PROGRESS
IN SALT, WILL CLARIFY THE POSSIBILITIES FOR AN MBFR
AGREEMENT; AND THAT THERE MAY BE A NEED FOR NEW
ALLIED DECISIONS ON THIS NEGOTIATION IN THE FORESEEABLE
FUTURE. DIRECT ALLIED PARTICIPANTS RETAIN A CLEAR INT-
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EREST IN A SOUND MBFR AGREEMENT, AND SEEM CONFIDENT IN
THEIR ABILITY TO AVOID BEING DRAWN INTO AN AGREEMENT
WHICH WOULD BE DETRIMENTAL TO THEIR SECURITY. PEREZ

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